



*TOWN OF HATFIELD*  
*MASSACHUSETTS*

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL  
59 Main Street  
Hatfield, MA 01038

*Select Board*

~  
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Message to Hatfield Residents

Over the past couple of weeks, folks have heard or read social media comments that the Select Board is terminating our ambulance services. The idea that the Select Board does not support our emergency services, or is planning to do away with ambulance response, could not be more dishonest.

We want to go on record as being fully supportive of our ambulance department and Chief Flaherty. The Select Board is aware of a high number of ambulance calls being answered by outside departments, most commonly Northampton but sometimes South County. Last year's budget discussions included much brainstorming around this matter. Chief Flaherty has made every effort to find solutions to this problem, including adding on-call shifts and building a sizable roster of per diem EMT's.

People have misunderstood or have not followed Select Board discussions. The Select Board has an obligation to examine all of our town services. With regards to EMS, it has become necessary for the Board to review our current ambulance operations, specifically, why we continue to miss calls prompting outside EMS services to respond.

- If we are going to continue to run an independent ambulance service, we need to know exactly what shifts will be covered, which will be left unfilled and at what financial cost to the townspeople.
- If we are going to go in front of the town to propose additional funding to create full time positions to cover evening and weekend shifts, it would be wrong of us to not do our homework for the town which may include in-house and outside service options. Additionally, we need to take into account other benefits and ramifications of building a full-time department. Ultimately townspeople need all the facts to be able to make an informed decision.

Over the past few years, out of a commitment to the health and safety of our residents, the Town has:

- Added Paramedic equipment
- Added a new ambulance
- Night response was in trouble, we added stand by pay

- Day time coverage was in trouble, we added a Chief paramedic and a fire fighter EMT to insure Monday through Friday daytime coverage
- Chief said he needed more people for coverage, we provide \$180,000
- Allocated \$35,000 from ARPA Funds for EMT weekend coverage

The Town had many EMT's sign up to be available on-call, but for some reason we seem to have lost a large number of EMT's. The Chief would like to add another full-time person. When factoring town costs, we need to also include benefits.

If the town is asked to authorize more money for operations, we need to show all the costs, since this budget might require a Proposition 2 ½ override if we exceed our annual tax levy limit. This decision may require a town -wide vote to raise taxes.

We are doing our due diligence as your elected officials to provide an overview of potential options for town meeting to discuss. We are simply fact-finding and not making any decisions one way or the other.